

Moving Forward

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There is a familiar saying: "If you are not part of the solution, you are a part of the problem." When I accepted the offer to serve as president of the new Norwich Terrier Club of America, my only thoughts were of trying to educate and show by example that it is possible to breed good, healthy, and attractive dogs. So much damage has been done to the American and foreign Norwich because many breeders simply will not accept the fact that Upper Airway Syndrome (UAS) and epilepsy are alive and well in many bloodlines. Ignorance and lethargy cannot be tolerated any longer, otherwise we will wind up like our English colleagues and have our beloved dogs classified as "vulnerable." I recently read an article about a breeder who did not like to dwell on the negative since our problems hadn't changed in 50 years. Well, we have to dwell on the negative to get to the positive. As long as we continue to stick our heads in the sand, this attitude will continue. We must think of the dogs' health and welfare before our own wants and desires.

Thank the "dog god" we have a wonderfully talented and hardworking club board. They have all risen to the challenge. We also have a smart, educated, and devoted health committee that will lead us to answers and, we hope, solutions. Our web site is up and running at norwichterrierclub.org, and our show committee has new facilities for our grand Montgomery specialty. Several supported entries are being held all over the country. Our Code of Ethics, Constitution, and Bylaws have been worked on feverishly by members of our talented board. We are a work in progress, and we thank the many members who have been so very supportive and patient.

Respected longtime member Jean Kessler recently wrote to the board out of a frustration that many of us have: "I feel that a breed club should exemplify the very best. Members should be the most responsible breeders, the best pet owners, and the best handlers and exhibitors. Belonging to a breed club should be an honor, not a given." We agree completely, and we want our new club to be exemplary—a club that all can be proud to be a member of. We are here to serve you, but the dogs must be served first. Therefore, we must hold our established and new members to a high standard. To do otherwise would be to lose our beloved breed to ignorance, lethargy, or worse yet, apathy.

— Joan Eckert · Kalamazoo MI · joaneckert@sbcglobal.net